

REMARKS

In the aforementioned Notice of Action, claims 1-10, 12-15 and 17-20 were rejected under 35. U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Citrowske (US 6,179,546) in view of Rossato (US 4,848,732).

Claims 11 and 16 were rejected as being unpatentable over Citrowske in view of Rossato and further in view of Hall (4,058,732).

Claims 1-10, 12-15 and 17-19 were rejected as being unpatentable over Salas (US 4,134,504) in view of Rossato.

Claims 11 and 16 were rejected as being unpatentable over Salas in view of Rossato and further in view of Hall.

Claim 20 was rejected as being upatentable over Salas in view of Rossato and further in view of Citrowske.

It is believed that the cancellation of claims 1 to 18 renders the rejection of these claims moot.

Claim 19 has been amended to include the limitation that the hollow container for receiving the platform and platform support is closable when these components are received inside. Claim 20 has been amended to correct an error and provide proper antecedent basis. It is believed that neither of Salas nor Citrowske teach a hollow container that is closable with the platform support received therein. Specifically, while the frame of Salas does comply with Meriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary's definition of a container as indicated by the examiner, it is not closable to protect the platform and platform support from damage and contamination by dirt and other materials. As indicated by the examiner, the end plate 87 of Citrowske is pivotally supported to extend across the platform support at an end thereof opposite the automobile with the platform support in the extended position. However, since the platform support 70 is mounted on the automobile A for pivotal motion about pivot pin

320, the end plate 87 cannot close off the hollow container 300 with the platform support received therein. Together, Figures 1c and 1d of Citrowske's patent illustrate the movement of the platform support 20 and resulting positions of the end plate 87 with respect to the container opening 304. Support for the closing of the container by the pivotal end plate in the present invention is found on page 8, lines 7-14 of the specification of the present application.

Based on the above distinctions from the teachings of Salas and Citrowske, it is believed that present claims 19 and 20 are in good order for allowance.

Newly added claim 21 corresponds to the original claim 1 with the added limitations of the original claims 9 and 11. As such, the claim includes the limitation that the platform is carried on the platform support by parallel levers which are actuated by one or more actuators, each extending along the platform support to pull a chain portion over an arc member at a base of a respective one of the levers. The claim also details that an end of the chain portion is attached to the arc member on a side of a pivot axis of the respective lever opposite the actuator, as supported in the description on page 9, lines 16-20. As outlined in the following paragraphs, it is believed that these limitations are not taught in the Hall patent.

In independent claim 21, the component pulled by the chain is now described as an arc-shaped member rather than merely an arc member. As such, the claim now clearly limits this component to being shaped like an arc and not merely defining an arc portion somewhere thereon. An arc as defined by Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary Unabridged is a bowlike curved line or object, or in geometrical context, a part of a curved line, as of a circle. Based on these definitions, which are believed to correspond to a common understanding of the word arc, the arc-shaped member indicated in present claim 21 clearly does not

encompass the circular sprocket wheels 84, 86 and 88 of Hall's patent. Also, the figures of the Hall patent show ends of the chains 82 and 90 being attached to the sprockets 84, 86 and 88 substantially below pivot points 32 and 34, not on a side thereof opposite the actuator 48. This arrangement results in the need for the sprockets to extend a full diameter in the vertical direction. As seen in Figure 5 of the present application, attachment of the chain portion 64 to the arc-shaped member 70 on a side of the pivot axis 72 opposite the actuator 60 (rather than below the axis) reduces the height of the arc member necessary to pivot the lever 42 and lift the platform 12.

It should be appreciated that the torque exerted about the pivot axis 72 by pulling of the chain portion 64 is determined by the force created by the pulling of the actuator 60 on the chain portion 64 and the radial size of the arc-shaped member 70. The use of an arc-shaped member therefore provides torque equal to that of a circular sprocket having the same radius (assuming no change in force supplied by the actuator) without the unnecessary height. The reduced height of this particular component allows a corresponding reduction in the height of the platform support 11 and the frame 10. In other words, the use of the arc member 70 to convert the linear motion of the actuator 60 to rotational motion of the lever 42 increases the ratio of the lifting torque to the height of the apparatus. Keeping the height of the apparatus to a minimum is important to allowing its installation on privately owned passenger vehicles, such as mini-vans, without requiring vehicle modification.

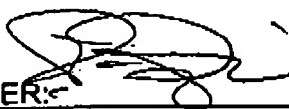
Based on the above distinction from the teachings of Hall, it is believed that the present independent claim 21 should be in good order for allowance. Present dependent claims 22-25 and 28-35 correspond to the original dependent claims, minus original claims 2, 9, 11, 14 and 16 which were concerned the limitations that have been included in the present independent claim 21. Present dependent claims

26 and 27 are concerned with the closable container for receiving the platform and platform support. Based on the above arguments concerning the independent claim 21, it is believed that the claims dependent thereon are also in good order for allowance.

In view of the foregoing, further and more favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted

ISAAC DYCK



PER: _____
Ryan W. Dupuis
Registration No: 47,345

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Adrian D. Battison - Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
Telephone (204) 944-0032 - FAX (204) 942-5723

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Lynn Leatherdale

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